

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

COUNCIL REPORT

MEETING DATE AND TIME	10 th August 2023	LOCATION	Town Hall
REPORT FROM	David McGifford, Chief Officer		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	Agenda item 15 – Remote public access to meeting		
Background	<p>On the 28th April 2022 the Council agreed to the procurement of the DTEN Conference system.</p> <p>CTC/75/2122 RESOLVED to approve the procurement of hybrid meeting equipment as recommended by the Town Hall, Assets and Services Committee.</p> <p>The principle for the procurement of the system was to enable high-quality hybrid meetings for the council, businesses and individuals.</p> <p>The early usage of this system was mainly for council and partnership working groups to be able to have hybrid meetings which could not be accommodated in the Spencer Suite.</p> <p>During this time the high-quality screen has been used for council and committee meetings rather than projecting onto walls, more recently officers were working with the suppliers to understand how this could be more efficiently used by all parties concerned.</p>		
Trials	<p>More recently we have gained a better understanding of its capability and how we can best link people into meetings as well as establishing what it is like for those that join remotely. In principle it is no different to a zoom meeting but on a larger scale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Previous trials have taken place with either a councillor or an officer remotely joining the meeting with the settings programmed as muted and not visible – the feedback was positive in terms of being able to hear what was being said and able to follow the meeting and view the papers as they were on screen.• At a Strategy Working Group it was noted that a couple of councillors could not be heard properly mainly due to the fact they appeared not to be using the microphones properly or were too quietly spoken.• The Partnership held a working group meeting using the system and also utilised the integrated recording system following agreement with all the attendees. When the meeting was finished there were 2 downloads as options for the recordings, one just audio the other audio and visual, both were of a good standard		
OPTIONS FOR USE FOR COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS	<p>Now we have a better understanding of the system we need to agree how we wish to use this for our Council and Committee meetings.</p> <p>Should we wish to consider having remote access for residents, all residents would need to be muted on entry and remain muted at all times, those wishing to speak</p>		

	<p>will need to provide advance notice so the officer in control can let them in to speak at the appropriate time.</p> <p>From the officers perspective when they are supporting the meeting, which includes presenting reports, managing the system and taking minutes it presents an additional pressure which in time should become manageable.</p> <p>Recordings of meetings is possible through this system however this is not currently being proposed but could be considered at a future date.</p>
Finance	There are no/ minimal financial implications for this decision.
Environment	With residents attending the meetings remotely it is potentially beneficial with regards to their carbon footprint
Equality	Those who are unable to get to meetings for varying reasons, ie childcare, no transport, a disability, will be given the opportunity to observe meetings.
Decision Requested	<p>For council to decide upon</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing remote access for residents to all Committee and Council meetings